

PATENT

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Application No. 09/943,685
Filing Date: August 30, 2001
Applicants: Terry Loughrin et al.
Group Art Unit: 3679
Examiner: Aaron M. Dunwoody
Title: Drive Shaft Coupling
Attorney Docket: 6039-000293

Mail Stop Reply Brief – Patents
Director of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450

REPLY BRIEF

Dear Sir:

In response to the Examiner's Answer dated June 2, 2005, please consider the following.

Applicants include three (3) copies of an Amended Brief. The Amended Brief includes paragraphs, pages and line numbers in the Summary of the Invention. Also, typographical errors have been corrected in this section. Further, the Amended Brief includes the Claim Appendix which corrects the claims as indicated by the Examiner.

ARGUMENT

In the Examiner's brief, in ¶10, the Examiner states that the Walters et al. reference illustrates "the joint component is both rotatable through a specified range of rotation and is fixed from axial movement relative to one of the set shaft". Nowhere does the Walters et al. reference illustrate such a feature. Walters et al., at best, in Figure 1, and in column 2, lines 47-49, briefly mentions a telescoping shaft. Nowhere does Walters et al., in the drawings or specification, disclose or suggest the joint component is both rotatable through a specified range of free motion rotation without torque transmission and is fixed from axial movement relative to one of the second shafts. There is no support for these features in the Walters et al. reference and for the Examiner to draw such a conclusion is pure conjecture.

The Ferguson reference relied on by Examiner has an elastic damper which always provides a reactive force to return and maintain the coupling in a first position. Free movement is not available in the Ferguson device. The elastomeric damper always interferes with the movement of the Ferguson coupling. Thus, the Ferguson device would not enable free motion, which is motion without any impediment or contact by any type of structure during rotation. Accordingly, the Examiner's combination fails to disclose or suggest Applicants' invention.

CONCLUSION


Applicants respectfully submit that the Examiner has failed to show the present invention would be obvious over Walters et al. in view of Ferguson. Further, the combination fails to illustrate a joint component rotatable through a specific range of

motion and is axially fixed with respect to one of the shafts. Additionally, the combination fails to show free motion as claimed by Applicants.

Accordingly, reversal of the final rejection of Claims 1-11 and allowance of these claims is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,
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